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Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA)

WHAT IS THE RHNA?

The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) is an assessment process performed periodically as part of housing element and General Plan updates at the local level. The RHNA quantifies the need for housing by income group within each jurisdiction during specific planning periods. The 5th cycle Final RHNA Allocation Plan was adopted by the SCAG Regional Council on October 4, 2012, and covers the planning period from October 15, 2013 to October 15, 2021. The RHNA is used in land use planning, to prioritize local resource allocation and to help decide how to address existing and future housing needs. The RHNA allows communities to anticipate growth, so that collectively the region can grow in ways that enhance quality of life, improve access to jobs, promote transportation mobility and address social equity and fair share housing needs. The regional projected housing need for the 5th cycle RHNA planning period is 412,137 units.

BACKGROUND

California State housing element law enacted in 1980 requires SCAG and other regional councils of government in California to determine the existing and projected regional housing needs for persons at all income levels. SCAG is also required by law to determine each jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need in the six-county Southern California region. The intention of SB 375 and the RHNA process is to create a better balance of jobs and housing in communities, ensure the availability of decent affordable housing for all income groups and achieve sustainability through long term strategic land use planning.

WHAT IS SCAG'S ROLE IN THE RHNA PROCESS?

As the regional Council of Governments (COG) for Southern California, State law requires SCAG to determine the existing and projected housing need for its region. SCAG's region encompasses the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura. SCAG takes the lead in overseeing the assessment by identifying measures to gauge housing demand and comparing those numbers against socioeconomic factors throughout the region. Upon request, SCAG's role in the process may be delegated to a sub-region.

The RHNA consists of two measurements: 1) existing need for housing, and 2) future need for housing.

- The existing need assessment examines key variables from Census data, to measure ways in which the housing market is not meeting the needs of current residents. This includes the number of low-income households paying more than 30% of their income for housing, as well as how many people occupy overcrowded housing units.
- The future need assessment is determined by SCAG's growth forecast and public participation process. Each new household (created by a young adult moving out of a parent's home or a family moving into a community for employment) creates the need for more housing. The anticipated need is then adjusted to account for an ideal level of vacant units.

HOW IS THE RHNA IMPLEMENTED?

The State's housing element law requires local governments to make plans to adequately address their share of existing and projected population growth, taking into consideration affordability of available and future housing.

Recognizing that the most critical decisions regarding housing development occur at the local level through a jurisdiction's General Plan, the housing law seeks to adequately address housing needs and demands. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) enforces State housing element law by requiring certified housing elements as part of every jurisdiction's General Plan.

WHO PAYS FOR THE RHNA?

COGs are no longer eligible for state reimbursement for RHNA costs. Therefore, RHNA is paid for by SCAG through its General Fund.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit the SCAG website at www.scag.ca.gov/rhna or contact **Ma'Ayn Johnson** at (213) 236-1975 or via email at johnson@scag.ca.gov.

SCAG REGION HOUSING FACTS

- ▼ Data indicates that more than half of Southern California's renters spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing
- ▼ By 2035, Southern California's population is projected to grow by 4 million people
- ▼ California's homeownership rate in 2010 was the third lowest in the nation at 56%, while Southern California's homeownership rate was even lower at 54%